

H5N1 bird flu found in dead English swans

by UPI

WEYMOUTH, England - The H5N1 avian influenza virus has been found in three swans found dead in a historic refuge on the south coast of England. Poultry farmers and other owners of domesticated birds have been ordered to keep their flocks segregated from wild birds within a 15-mile control area around the Abbotsbury Swannery in Dorset, The Scotsman reported. "Our message to all bird-keepers is that they must be vigilant," said Fred Landeg, acting chief veterinary officer. The H5N1 strain, first detected in southeast Asia in poultry, has been spread around the world by migratory wild birds. The virus has also infected humans, mostly through contact with infected poultry, although health officials fear it could mutate to spread person-to-person. The Abbotsbury Swannery is near Chesil Beach in Dorset, a famous English beauty spot and an area with important wetlands. Records show that a swan refuge has been on the site since 1354.

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